Pathetic Stray

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/52392925.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Alana Bloom & Will Graham & Hannibal Lecter, Margot Verger & Mason Verger
Characters:	Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham, Alana Bloom, Lady Murasaki (Hannibal Rising), Ms. Perdita (Hannibal), Mason Verger, Margot Verger, Winston (Hannibal), Buster (Hannibal), Applesauce (Hannibal)
Additional Tags:	Genderbent Margot Verger, Kid Fic, Inspired by Song of the South, Retelling, Margot Verger is Called Garrett Verger, Fist Fights, Broken english
Language:	English
Series:	Part 5 of Hannibalized Disney Tales
Stats:	Published: 2024-01-19 Words: 2,803 Chapters: 1/1

Pathetic Stray

by 305unreal

Summary

Hannibal is sent to live in the Deep South after his guardians' divorce, where he befriends Will and Alana.

Notes

- Hannibal Lecter, age 12: An intelligent and curious boy from an aristocratic family in Baltimore. Though refined, he finds the rural plantation life boring without his guardian Uncle Robertus.
- Will Graham, age 9: A lonely orphan boy who lives and works on the plantation. He has a gift for empathy and understanding animals.
- Alana Bloom, age 11: A poor girl living with her abusive stepbrother twins on a neighboring plantation. She is kind but wary of strangers.
- Mason and Garrett Verger, age 14: Aggressive twin boys who torment Alana and the local children.

It's a sweltering summer morning when the carriage carrying Hannibal Lecter, Lady Murasaki, and his grandmother rattle up the long drive to the plantation house. Hannibal peers eagerly out the window, curious about their new home, when he spies a boy about his age watching from the edge of the forest. As the carriage pulls to a stop, Hannibal hurries to disembark, excitement temporarily overriding his disappointment at parting from Uncle Robertus. Lady Murasaki smiles warmly at her charge's enthusiasm, though inwardly frets over the responsibility of caring for the willful young heir alone.

Before the servants can attend them, Hannibal darts towards the tree line where the other boy still lingers. Up close, he sees intense blue eyes regarding him warily from a face speckled with freckles. "Hello! I'm Hannibal," he introduces himself with a smile. "What's your name?"

The country boy remains silent for a moment, as if sizing Hannibal up. At length, he murmurs, "Will. I live here." His gaze flicks to the main house behind them. "They's 'spectin' ya. Best get on inside."

Hannibal glances back as well, noting Lady Murasaki watching fondly from the porch. Though he wishes to explore more, he knows Will speaks the truth. "Thank you, Will. I hope we can play later if your chores permit?"

At the other boy's shy nod, Hannibal beams and trots to the house. Over a lavish Southern breakfast, Hannibal's questions about the plantation and its inhabitants are gently deflected by his grandmother until Lady Murasaki intervenes as Will moves about in the background.

"Hannibal, why not take Will as your guide today? I'm sure he knows far more than we city folk."

Will flushes but straightens under the responsibility. After the meal, he shyly leads Hannibal around the grounds, pointing out crop fields and livestock with new enthusiasm. Hannibal sees not drudgery in farm life, but a budding curiosity in the eyes of his new friend.

As they walk, Hannibal questions Will further. "What sorts of animals live in these woods?"

Will peeks up through his shaggy curls. "All kinds - deer, possums, rabbits. Some even say mountain lions, but I ain't seen none myself."

Hannibal smiles. "Perhaps we'll spot some tracks today. I'd wager you know this forest better than anyone."

A proud grin flashes across Will's face before vanishing once more into shy reserve. "Reckon so. Growed up here all my life." He shuffles his feet. "Folks round here - they ain't always nice."

Hannibal's brow furrows. "Why do you say that?"

Will withdraws into himself, eyes fixed on the leaf-strewn path. "Don't matter. C'mon, I'll show ya the stream."

He darts ahead, leaving Hannibal to wonder at his vague warning. The stream is cool and clear, host to darting minnows. Will kicks off his boots to soak his feet, darting Hannibal a glance as if expecting a rebuke. But Hannibal follows suit with a chuckle, sighing in pleasure as the water eases the heat of the day. As they splash, Hannibal's curiosity blooms anew.

"Will, who raised you, if you don't mind me asking?"

He knows too well the harsh realities some orphaned children face. Will's smile fades, and for a moment he looks very small and far away. But then his blue eyes find Hannibal's, and he speaks.

"My folks passed on of fever when I was real little," Will begins quietly. "Missus Murasaki's kind mama took me in. She's growed frail of late, so it's mostly me on my own now."

Hannibal watches him carefully. "You said the people here aren't always nice. Do they mistreat you?"

Will stares into the stream, running a hand through the cool water. "Ain't nothin' I can't handle. Jus' the Verger twins bein' loudmouths is all."

Hannibal recalls the name. "We met a girl named Alana at breakfast. Are the Vergers cruel to her as well?"

A flicker of worry crosses Will's face. "Reckon so. Saw bruises on her before. But she won't say nothin' against 'em."

Hannibal's jaw sets with resolve. He has a curious mind but recognizes injustice when he sees it. "We simply must find a way to help our friends, Will. No one deserves such treatment."

Will studies him thoughtfully. "Yer different than most folks round here, Hannibal. But... I think you's right. Reckon together we could think of somethin'."

A glint snaps into his eyes, and Hannibal knows they've just forged an unbreakable bond. The boys stay by the stream, hatching plans of mischief and mystery into the late afternoon sun.

Alana's screams echo through the tall grass, carrying on the breeze to where Will and Hannibal brainstorm. In an instant, the easy smiles flee their faces as they exchange a grim look of understanding. Will shoots up quicker than a wet cat, sprinting back the way they've come with Hannibal hard on his heels. They burst from the trees to find Alana struggling in Mason's grasp while Garrett dangles a whimpering pup above the rushing creek waters.

"Let him go, you bullyin' bastard!" Will yells, barreling straight into Garrett with a thunderous crash.

The puppy yelps as it falls, but Will snatches it from the air unharmed. Hannibal leaps upon Mason nearby, freeing Alana who collapses in tears.

Will thrusts the shaking pup into her arms. "It's alright - he's okay now."

But his gaze turns deadly as it finds the twins rising with murder in their eyes.

Mason wriggles free and rounds on Hannibal with a sneer. "Think you're so high and mighty, city boy? This ain't your territory."

A new steel enters Hannibal's gaze, and he meets the bully's challenge without flinching. A tense standoff ensues, finally broken when the twins skulk away, nursing fresh wounds to pride and flesh. Hannibal watches them go with calculating eyes, wheels already turning. No one will terrorize his new friends again without answering for it. With the twins' retreat, a calm settles once more over the pastoral fields. Alana's sniffles subside as she cuddles her rescued pup.

"Thank you," she says in a small voice. "Both of you."

Will smiles, accepting no credit. But Hannibal's thoughtful gaze stays fixed on the forest whither Mason and Garrett have disappeared. This is no isolated incident—their cruelty runs deeper than mere sibling rivalry. A familiar shyness overcomes Will then.

"Best get home afore dark," he mumbles, scuffing at the grass.

Hannibal is loath to part so soon after this close call. "Won't you show me your home first, Will?" he asks gently. "I should like to see where my friend lives."

Will blushes at the word 'friend' but nods. Alana follows, no longer alone in her troubles. They come upon a humble cabin in a sun-warmed glade. Within, a kindly old negress dozes by the fire.

"This is Ms. Perdita," Will introduces her fondly.

At the door, Ms. Perdita greets them with a warm smile.

"Any friend of William's is always welcome here," she declares, pouring cups of cool buttermilk.

Applesauce curls contentedly by the fire as Will and Hannibal explain the day's perilous events - especially the tale of the twins' thwarted misdeeds retold with care not to worry her. As evening draws nigh, Alana reluctantly turns her steps toward the grim manor that is no home to her. Seeing her anxiety for her small friend, Will steps in.

"You ain't gotta worry none, Alana," he says kindly. "Ms. Perdita and I'll look after Applesauce real good, I promise."

Ms. Perdita's face creases with concern for Alana's well-being under that ghastly roof. But she soothes, "This little darling will want for nothin' here, you can be sure. Why don't you come to check on her whenever your heart desires, child?"

Alana beams, eyes wet once more - but this time with joy. At last, she's found protectors in this place, and a place of refuge from misery. Her face lights with relief and gratitude. Will nestles the fluffball pup into his arms, cooing gentle words as he snuggles close. Ms. Perdita thanks the kids for their help, and Will for bringing company at last to brighten his solitary days. Hannibal and Alana bid their friend goodbye with a promise to meet on the morrow. But darkness brings no rest, for schemes are hatched on this night of fair justice and fellowship against the forces of cruelty in this idyllic yet shadowed corner of the old South.

A week passes in a peaceful rhythm at the cabin, though dark shadows still linger beyond. But on one bright morn, Will spots a fine carriage winding up the grassy lane and knows his friend has come. Hannibal disembarks smiling, greeted by a furry whirlwind.

"Down, Applesauce!" laughs Will as the pup bounces and two shaggy hounds join the fray. "Winston, Buster, mind your manners - it's Hannibal's special day!"

For today is Hannibal's birthday, and he has come to deliver a joyous invitation. "Dear Will, dear Alana - will you come and celebrate with my family at the plantation this evening?"

Ms. Perdita beams her blessing for the occasion, pressing treats into their hands for the festivities. As they ride, Hannibal regales them with news of the plantation, and Will shares stories of the dogs. The trio walks cheerfully down the dusty lane, with the pup and hounds gamboling at their heels on this fine birthday eve. But as they round a bend, a hateful sight makes Alana gasp – for there lurk Mason and Garrett amid the tall grass. Before Will or Hannibal can react, the twins pounce with sneering laughter, shoving Alana face-first into a muddy puddle.

“Pathetic stray,” snarls Mason as she emerges weeping, ruined dress caked with muck.

Rage darkens Hannibal's eyes to a stormy sea, his polite façade dropping entirely. While Hannibal bares clenched teeth like a feral beast, a feral cry tears from Will's throat as he launches himself at Mason. Hannibal comes at Garrett with calculated violence, jabbing his elbow into the boy's gut before pinning his arms. For long moments the skirmish rages, Will a dervish of protective fury against Mason's taunts and blows. Hannibal fights with cold precision, eyes gleaming with wrathful satisfaction at each grunt of pain from Garrett. Fists and feet fly in a flurry, all thoughts of restraint vanishing in outrage.

"Yield, or answer for your sins!" Hannibal growls with unchildlike menace.

However, their moment of vengeance is not to be. A gruff shout rents the air, and strong hands pull the brawling boys apart with ease.

“Enough o’ dat foolishness!” rumbles the grizzled farmer, called Uncle Pongo by all, giving each combatant a shake.

Will and Hannibal are left panting yet unslaked in their wrath. Bruises blossom on all parties as the farmer surveys the damage with a disapproving scowl. His eyes linger with a hint of grudging respect for the boys' fierce defense of their friend. Their justice this day is harsh, but not undeserved - and Alana's safety remains the sole priority in their young hearts. Scowling, the twins slink off into the tall grass once more. Uncle Pongo soothes the boys’ fury and gives them an idea of where Alana's disappeared - weeping into the sheltering trees. Uncle

Pongo's carriage turns toward the twins' destination, but Will and Hannibal slip into the gathering dusk.

"Alana?" Will calls softly into the shadowy woods.

Beside him, Hannibal makes a low clicking sound with his tongue, the signal they'd devised with Applesauce. Soon soft panting and the pitter-patter of paws draws near. The pup comes bounding with a wagging tail, but no Alana follows. Her damp dress lies abandoned on the forest floor. Will scoops it up with worry – has she come to harm? Following Applesauce's lead, they track her deeper in. Rounding a gnarled oak at last, they come upon her curled, tear-stained form by moonlight. Alana startles at their approach but melts into silent sobs at the sight of their caring faces. Will wraps his coat around her shaking shoulders while Hannibal gently combs leaves from her damp hair. No words are needed – only compassion healing the wounds of cruelty. The forest seems to sigh around them, bearing soft witness as the three friends take shelter in empathy and understanding. In time, Alana's tears subside, replaced by a weary smile up at Will and Hannibal's caring visages.

"We're sorry we couldn't stop them sooner," Will sighs, ever blaming himself though not at fault.

Hannibal lays a hand on his arm. "The what-ifs matter not. Your strength is in resilience, not regret."

Alana nods and a thought occurs, lighting her eyes once more. "The party - is it not still going? We could all do with the fun now."

The boys agree, unwilling to abandon her. So, as darkness falls fully, three figures emerge from the woods' edge - no longer downtrodden, but together and unbowed. Arriving at the grand house, they find tables heavy with cakes, pies, and sweet tea under colorful paper decor. Laughter and music fill the humid air. Even the usually dour Lady Murasaki smiles at seeing her charge so happy among new friends. In each other's company that evening, the darkness feels very far away indeed. Their bonds are now welded as strong as a family, ready to weather whatever storms lay ahead. As the festivities wind to a close under glowing paper lanterns, Hannibal's friends can feel a shadow has fallen. Lady Murasaki's serene face holds a forbidding countenance as she approaches, leading him away from his companions.

"You have disrespected my hospitality, Hannibal, by abandoning your own celebration without a word. Such reckless disregard for manners cannot go unanswered." Her tone turns the boy's blood to ice.

"Lady Murasaki, please - it was to comfort Alana after the Vergers' cruelty," Hannibal pleads, grasping for reason.

But her gaze remains flinty. "I have spared no effort to raise a gentleman of standing. Association with those less fortunate will only drag you down." She sweeps an icy stare over Will and Alana, huddled together anxiously.

"But they are my friends!" protests Hannibal, his thick Lithuanian accent bleeding into his voice. "I cannot abandon them to darkness!"

His entreaties fall on deaf ears. With a chill parting command, Lady Murasaki forbids any further meetings, ending all in despairing silence. Wordless farewells are shared as Hannibal's friends turn away down the elm-lined path, heads bowed under this new injustice. But in Will and Alana's eyes, Hannibal reads a steely promise - that adversity will not break the ties between them, nor their resolve to withstand the shadows threatening to overwhelm this place. Through any means, their bond will persevere.

Nearing midnight, as the plantation slumbers, Hannibal creeps quietly from the manor with his belongings bundled in tow. Steeling his nerves, he makes his way through the shadowy fields until Will's humble cabins come into view. He tosses tiny pebbles at the window until Will's tired face appears.

"I cannot remain here under her thumb. I had thought to flee to Baltimore alone," he whispers.

Will nods solemnly. "I reckon she wants ta crush what we got. But I ain't gonna let you go without help."

"What do you suggest?"

"Can you drive a carriage?" Hannibal nods affirmatively, and Will smirks. "I've got Winston, Buster, and Applesauce. You go get the carriage, an' me and Alana'll sneak some pr'visions. Meet back here soon as ya can."

Hannibal agrees to this plan with quiet gratitude. They can face whatever lies ahead united, as a family should. Reaching the loom of the Verger-Bloom estate, Will slips inside with ease, sticking to the shadows. Alana gathers her necessities and they fill two cloth bags with food and drink. They soon return to Will's cabin where the dogs patiently wait. Will leaves a note for Ms. Perdita so she won't grow worried. Not long after, Hannibal arrives. Without a word, the trio loads into the wagon. Under cover of night, Will guides the wagon down quiet lanes as his companions doze, spent from the day's tribulations. Even in slumber, their faces reflect resolve to withstand any hardship together.

A peaceful glade welcomes the weary travelers as dawn light filters through birch boughs. While Alana and the dogs slumber on, Will takes Hannibal aside. "This hollow's 'lone enough - we can rest and plan freely now, Hann, without all them watchin' eyes."

Hannibal thanks the stars for Will's stalwart guidance and protection of their charge. As Alana and the pups rouse to a light breakfast, the boys confer in low tones.

"Lady Murasaki moves to sever my roots," muses Hannibal darkly. "But you and Alana are my true home. I'll not submit while you remain in shadows' grip. What say you - shall we build new roots of our own designs?"

Together they'll walk whatever road lays ahead, sheltering each other from all darkness. Their bond will not be broken by cruelty or control. United they would stand, come what may.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!